



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

DEC 29 2008

OFFICE OF
ENFORCEMENT AND
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

West-wide Energy Corridor PEIS
Argonne National Laboratory
9700 S. Cass Ave., Bldg. 900, Mail Stop 4
Argonne, IL 60439

Dear Sir/Madam:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Department of Energy's (DOE) and the Department of the Interior's (DOI) final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (FPEIS) for the Designation of Energy Corridors on Federal Land in the 11 Western States (CEQ #20080482) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, and our authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The final PEIS was prepared to satisfy section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPAct), which requires the designation of energy corridors on federal lands in 11 western states. It also establishes procedures to ensure that additional corridors are identified and designated as necessary and to expedite applications for future energy transmission and distribution facilities. When approved, the action will universally provide an amendment to 165 land management or equivalent plans for the federal lands where the corridors are located.

The FPEIS evaluated a No Action Alternative (no designation of energy corridors pursuant to section 368 of the EPAct), and the Proposed Action (designation of 6,112 miles of energy corridors based on environmental, engineering, and land use screens to reduce potential environmental and land use conflicts). Under the Proposed Action corridors will be 3,500 feet wide to support multiple energy projects unless otherwise specified based on environmental or management constraints. The FPEIS was responsive to most concerns raised in our comment letter on the draft EIS; however, the following concerns remain.

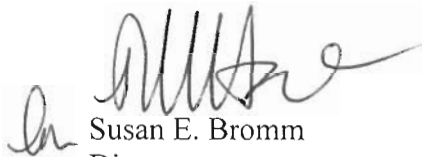
While the FPEIS adequately addressed the need for additional information related to development and implementation of interagency operating procedures (IOPs) and

impacts to visual resources areas, EPA still has concerns about the potential impacts to wetlands in the designated corridors. Therefore, we suggest that the Record of Decision require additional information be incorporated into future site-specific NEPA analysis for energy projects. Such additional information includes a site specific delineation of wetlands and associated quantification of impacts, characterization of the functional value of wetlands impacted, discussion of potential avoidance and minimization of impacts including the development of a compensatory mitigation plan for unavoidable wetland losses, and appropriate coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers.

The FPEIS states, on page 3-85, that "intercepts with sole-source aquifers in the western states were not identified because maps showing the extent of sole-source aquifers and their recharge areas were not available for all of the states concerned". EPA would like to inform you that information and maps on designated sole-source aquifers in the western states is located on the following website:
<http://cfpub.epa.gov/safewater/sourcewater/sourcewater.cfm?action=SSA>.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and if I can provide any additional information please contact me at (202) 564-5400, or you can contact Jessica Trice of my staff at (202) 564-6646.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Susan E. Bromm", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Susan E. Bromm
Director
Office of Federal Activities